

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, March 29. 1707.

I shall crave no Body's Pardon for defending the Memory of his late Majesty in my two last Papers, except it be that of his Majesty's Friends, for doing it no better; the Excursion from the Chain of the Story is but short, compar'd to the Greatness of the Subject, and those that like the Theme, will bear with the Interruption.

I have a long Time dwelt on the Subject of a Union; I have happily seen it transacted in the Kingdom of Scotland; I have seen it carry'd on there thro' innumerable Oppositions, both publick and private, peaceable and unpeaceable; I have seen it perfected there, and ratify'd, sent up to England, debated oppos'd, and at last pass'd in both Houses, and having obtain'd the Royal Assent, I have the Pleasure, just while I am writing these Lines, to hear the

Guns proclaiming the happy Conjunction from Edinburgh Castle.

And cho' it brings an unsatisfying childish Custom in Play, and exposes me to a vain, and truly ridiculous Saying in England, *As the Fool thinks, Sir, yet 'tis impossible to put the lively Sound of the Cannon just now firing, into any other Note to my Ear, than the articulate Expression of UNION,*

UNION.

Strange Power of Imagination, strange Incoherence of Circumstances, that fills the Mind so with the thing, that it makes even the Thunder of Warlike Engines cry Peace; and what is made to divide and destroy, speaks out the Language of this Glorious Conjunction!

I have hardly Room to introduce the various Contemplations of the Consequences of this mighty Transaction; 'tis a Sea of universal

universal Improvement, every Day it discovers new Mines of Treasure, and when I launch out in the Barque of my own Imagination, I every Minute discover new Success, new Advantages, and the approaching Happiness of both Kingdoms.

Nor am I an idle Spectator here; I have told *Scotland* of Improvements in Trade, Wealth and Shipping, that shall accrue to them on the happy Conclusion of this Affair, and I am plea'd doubly with this, that I am like to be one of the first Men, that shall give them the Pleasure of the Experiment.

I have told them of the Improvement of their Coal Trade, and 'tis their own Fault, if they do not particularly engage 20 or 25 Sail of Ships immediately from *England* on that Work.

I have told them of the Improvement of their Salt, and I am now contracting for *English* Merchants, for *Scots* Salt, to the Value of above 10000*l.* per Annum.

I have told them of Linen Manufactures, and I have now above 100 poor Families at Work, by my Procuring and Direction, for the making such Sorts of Linen, and in such Manner as never was made here before, and as no Person in the Trade will believe, could be made here, till they see it.

This has been my Employment in *Scotland*, and this my Endeavour to do that Nation Service, and convince them by the Practice, that what I have said of the Union, has more Weight in it, than some have endeavour'd to perswade them.

Those, that have charg'd me with Missions and Commissions, from neither they nor I know who, shall blush at their Rashness, and be ashame'd for reflecting on a Man, come hither on purpose to do them Good.

Have I had a hand in the Union? — Have I been maltreated by the Tongues of the violent, threatn'd to be murther'd and insulted, because I have pleaded for it, and press'd you to it? — Gentlemen, in *Scotland*, I referr you to her Majesty's Speech, there's my Claim, and you do me too much Honour to entitle me to a Share, in what her Majesty says shall be their Due, that have done so.

Hearken to the Words of your Sovereign — I make no doubt, but it will be remembred, and spoke of hereafter to the Honour of those, that have been instrumental to bring it to such an happy Conclusion.

QUEEN's Speech to the Parliament, March, 6. 1707.

Pray, Gentlemen, have a Care how you charge me with having any hand in bringing forward this Matter to such an happy Conclusion, lest you build that Monument upon me, which Her Majesty has foretold, and honour the Man, you would debate.

I plead no merit, I do not raise the Value of what I have done; and I know some, that are gone to *London* to sollicit the Reward of what they have had no hand in, I might have said, are gone to claim the Merit, of what I have been the single Author of — But as this has been the constant Way of the World with me, so I have no Repinings on that Account; nor am I pleading any other Merit, than that I may have it wrote on my Grave, that I did my Duty in promoting the Union, and consequently the Happiness of these Nations.

I know, nothing remains for me to do, but to sit down pleas'd and thankful, tho' I am like to be among those, who are like to enjoy the least Share of Blessing by the Union.

One thing however I must acquaint the World with, and which I am confirm'd in by Her Majesty's Speech — I cannot quit the Subject, nor go on in the History of this Union, which GOD willing, I purpose to write, till I have, as I lately promis'd Review, No. . . . of Vol. III. undertaken to show these Nations their reciprocal Duty and Obligation one towards another.

In pursuing which, if they will not make this Union the Foundation of Greatness, Wealth, Strength, and all Sorts of Happiness to both Kingdoms, it shall be their own inexcusable Negligence, Diffidence, Sloth, and Perverseness; and even this Paper, tho' not like the Blood of Whitney's Horse to a late Warty of the Law, shall rise up against them, and be a standing Monument and Witness against their most unaccountable Folly.

MISCELLANEA.

I Cannot let the necessary Part of this Paper on the publick Affair of Government and *Union* jottle out particular Cases, and therefore shall leave this Part, to speak to that Variety, the Age presents.

I have been long arguing against new and exorbitant Ways of ordering our Manufactures; I have prov'd, to transplant our Trade or break into its Circumstances, is to transplant and remove our People, ruin and rebuild Towns, &c. Let us now examine a little the Consequence of that.

This removing of People is attended with many Inconveniences, which are not easily perceiv'd; as

1. The immediate Fall of the Value of all Lands in those Countries, where the Manufactures were before; for as the Numbers of People by the Consumption of Provisions, must wherever they encrease, make Rents rise and Lands valuable; so those People removing, tho' the Provisions would, if possible, follow them, yet the Price of them must fall by all that Charge they are at for Carriage, and consequently Lands must fall in Proportion.

2. This Transplanting of Families, in Time would produce great and new Alterations in the Countries they remov'd to, which as they would be to the Profit of some Places, would be to the Detriment of others, and can by no means be just any more than inconvenient; for no wise Government studies to put any Branch of their Country to any particular Disadvantages, tho' it may be found in the general Account in another Place.

If it be said, here will be Manufactures in every Parish, and that will keep the People at home.

I humbly represent what strange Confusion and particular Detriment to the general Circulation of Trade, mention'd before, it must be, to have every Parish make its own Manufactures.

1. It will make our Towns and Counties independent on one another, and put a

Damp to Correspondence, which all will allow to be a great Motive to Trade in general.

2. It will fill us with various Sorts and Kinds of Manufactures, by which our stated Sorts of Goods will in Time dwindle away in Reputation, and Foreigners not know them one from another. Our several Manufactures are known by their respective Names; and our Serges, Bays and other Goods are bought abroad by the Character and Reputation of the Places where they are made; when there shall come new and unheard of Kinds to Market, some better, some worse, as to be sure new Undertakers will vary in Kinds, the Dignity and Reputation of the *English* Goods abroad will be lost, and so many Confusions in Trade will follow, as are too many to recount.

3. Either our Parish Stock must sell by Wholesale or by Retail, or both; if the first, 'tis doubted they will make sorry Work of it, and having other Businesses of their own, make but poor Merchants; if by Retail, then they turn Pedlars, will be a publick Nuisance to Trade, and at last ruin it.

4. This will ruin all the Carriers in *England*, the Wool will be all manufactured where it is sheare'd; every Body will make their own Cloaths, and the Trade, which now lives by running thro' a Multitude of Hands, will go then thro' so few, that thousands of Families will want Employment, and this is the only way to reduce us to the Condition spoken of, to have more Hands than Work.

'Tis the Excellence of our *English* Manufacture, that it is so planted as to go thro' as many Hands as 'tis possible; he that contrives to have it go thro' fewer, ought at the same time to provide Work for the rest—As it is, it employs a great Multitude of People, and can employ more; but if a considerable Number of those people be unthir'd from their Employment, it cannot but be detrimental to the whole.

When.

When I say, we could not employ more People in *England*, I do not mean, that we cannot do our Work with those we have, but I mean thus.

First, it should be more People brought over from foreign Parts. I do not mean, that those we have, should be taken from all common Employments, and put to our Manufacture, we may unequally dispose of our Hands, and so have too many for some Works, and too few for others; and 'tis plain, that in some Parts of *England* it is so: What else can be the Reason, why in our Southern Parts of *England*, *Kent* in particular, borrows 20000 People of other Countries to get in her Harvest.

But if more Foreigners came among us, if it were 2 Millions, it could do us no Harm; because they would consume our Provisions, and we have Land enough to produce much more than we do, and they would consume our Manufactures, and we have Wool enough for any Quantity.

I think therefore, with Submission, to erect Manufactures in every Town, to transpose the Manufactures into private Parishes and Corporations, to parcel out our Trade to every Door, it must be ruinous to the Manufactures themselves, will turn thousands of Families out of their Employments, and take the Bread out of the Mouths of diligent and industrious Families, to feed Vagrants, Thieves and Beggars, who ought much rather to be compell'd by legal Methods, to seek that Work, which it is plain, is to be had; and thus this Act will, instead of settling and relieving the Poor, increase their Number, and starve the best of them.

It remains now, according to my first Proposal, to consider, from whence proceeds the Poverty of our People, what Accident, what Decay of Trade, what Want of Employment, what strange Revolution of Circumstances makes our People poor, and consequently burthenous, and our Laws deficient, so as to make more and other Laws requisite, and the Nation concern'd to apply a Remedy to this growing Disease; but this must be refer'd to the next Paper.

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